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1<sup>st</sup> June 2024

To  
Shri Rajiv Kumar,  
Chief Election Commissioner  
Election Commission of India

**Subject: Investigate Voter Intimidation and  
Suppression in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha  
Constituency 2024**

Sir,

This representation is made to request urgent action on serious instances of voter suppression and intimidation reported by voters from the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha Constituency 2024. Following disturbing reports in news media<sup>1</sup> and ground reports of multiple instances of intimidation and suppression of voters in parts of the Gandhinagar Parliamentary Constituency in Gujarat on 7 May 2024, ANHAD invited the four undersigned, as concerned citizens, to visit Gandhinagar. Our aim was to make preliminary enquiries directly with voters to determine whether the situation warrants more comprehensive investigation and action.

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1. Attached as annexure

Between 14-18 May, members of our team met and heard the accounts shared by voters from several booths/wards in Kalol, Vejalpur and Sanand – three of Gandhinagar Lok Sabha's seven Assembly constituencies. Most of the voters we met recounted personal experiences of being discouraged, deterred or intimidated – either by petty miscreants, or seasoned criminals, or leaders and cadres of the ruling party. Many of them expressed grievances about the police and election commission officials who, they said, had by acts of omission or commission facilitated voter suppression by ruling party cadres.

We bring these voters' voices to you in the belief that the ECI has a duty to investigate and address their grave allegations of voter suppression.

**These allegations, and the testimonies of voters who expressed them, are shared below.**

### **A) Voters Say Their Neighbourhoods Were “Ordered” Not To Vote**

In Sanand taluka, we met with several voters residing in villages Geedhpura, Andej, Vakrana, Shantipura, and Kanethhi, from where instances of voter suppression had been reported.

The affected voters in Geedhpura were from the land-owning Darbar community; in Andej, Vakrana, and Kanethhi, from Dalit and OBC communities; and in Shantipura, mostly from the Muslim community.

In Vakrana, Kanethhi and Shantipura, several voters reported that BJP cadres visited their neighbourhoods the day before the elections, and issued “orders” that not a single voter from their neighbourhoods must cast a vote, because all votes from the village

had been pledged to Home Minister Amit Shah (the BJP candidate from Gandhinagar). These orders, they said, were backed up with threats of being blacklisted from jobs in the village.

### **1. Vakrana, (Sanand Taluka) Booths 130, 131**

BJP's former Gujarat General Secretary Pradip Singh Vaghela is from village Vakrana. **The voters we met were from Dalit and OBC communities. They told us that on the eve of voting, dominant caste BJP supporters visited their neighbourhoods and warned, “if you want to live in this village and remain workers in our employ, no one from your *mohalla* (neighbourhood) should go to cast their vote.”**

Three women in their 60s, and four men aged between 38 and 45, each told us separately that their entire community had been warned: **“If you vote, no one in the village will employ you.”**

Some voters said that in some areas of Vakrana, on the eve of elections, **Dalit and OBC voters were made to gather publicly and swear by the Kuldevi to vote only for “him” (Amit Shah).** Only if they were willing to make such a pledge would they be allowed to vote.

We were told by Vakrana villagers that of a total of 1034 votes in Booth 130, 925 votes were recorded. And in Booth 131, 585 out of a total of 686 votes were shown as cast. How could the voter turnout records be so high when large segments of voters were not allowed to vote, or even to come to the polling station, they asked, concluding that bogus voting is indicated.

### **2. Kanethhi, (Sanand Taluka), Booths 88, 89**

The voters we met here were either Dalit or OBC. Many of them named one man in their accounts: **Jitu Vaghani aka 'Jitu Bhai.'**

**Vaghani is the BJP MLA from Bhavnagar West, and known to be a protege of Home Minister Shri Amit Shah.**

A Dalit woman aged 49 said, "I went to vote at 7.30 am, and was told my vote had been cast as soon as the booth opened in the morning. They said, **tell your whole neighbourhood not to come to vote, we have already sent all the votes to Amit Shah, he will get development for our village.**"

Another Dalit woman, aged 45, said, "I set out to vote at 8 am. I thought I will be able to vote with the police's help. When I arrived **Jitu Bhai said, what is the matter with you? Do you dislike development for this village or the nation, is that why you turn up to vote?** Consider the interests of this village and for its sake go back. **Your vote has already been given to Amit Shah.**"

A man aged 22 said, "I am an agricultural labourer in the village. At the polling station they told me: son, you go off to work now. If not we'll let you vote, but your employer is our man, we'll speak to him and tomorrow you'll be out of work. **I got scared. I have a household to support. If my obstinate insistence on voting costs me my job how will I feed my wife, our one year-old daughter, and my 59 year-old mother?**"

A 35 year-old man who works in Narol, said, "I traveled 15-20 kilometres to the village on my motorcycle - in spite of the blazing sun - to cast my vote. When I reached the polling station Jitu Bhai, who is very close to Amit Shah, hurled abuses at me and said my vote has already been cast. **Jitu Bhai is a dangerous man, he's very close to the Home Minister, tangling with him means inviting an assault on one's family.** So I returned home. This was my first experience of this kind, and it left me shaken."

### 3. Shantipura (Sanand Taluka), Booths 103, 104, 105

Sanand voters that met with the team informed that not only did BJP cadres order them not to vote; on polling day, a large number of Muslim voters were taken by buses to Ajmer.

One man, age 55, said, "I didn't go to vote out of fear. Even before election day **BJP workers warned Muslims not to vote, and even loaded some into buses and took them to Ajmer so to make sure they didn't vote.**"

Another, age 47, said that when he went to vote at 10 am, BJP people at the table outside the polling station told him, "You weren't supposed to come here. Yesterday the whole *mohalla* was told not to vote, Mulla didn't you understand, or were you not told? Head home quietly without making trouble." When he went to the police present at the spot, they told him, "**Uncle why are you bothering your head with this? Anyway your vote is useless because the results are a foregone conclusion, the Home Minister is bound to win, don't tangle with these guys, go home.**" He said went home scared and persuaded all 9 members of his family not to vote.

A shop owner aged 28 said he decided to stay and vote, even though all the other voters in his family agreed to take the bus to Ajmer. When he arrived at the polling station at 11 am, he said that BJP cadres seated at the table outside told him, "**We had arranged for you lot to go to Ajmer today, yet not only did you stay back, you had the temerity to come here to vote! Watch out, we'll take care of you after the elections.** If you want to run your shop in this village, you had better go home now."

A man aged 55 said he and his family agreed to get on the bus to Ajmer on election day because, "in case there was any trouble in the

village, we would be able to tell the police we weren't there, we were in Ajmer and so you can't pin anything on us.”

A 19-year-old boy said, “This was **my first chance to vote in an election and I was so keen. But my Abbu insisted on taking me to Ajmer**, and I am so disappointed.”

One Muslim woman aged 41 told us that her husband and in-laws, fearing trouble, had resolved that no one in the family would vote this time. But, she said, “I **plucked up the courage to go vote**, and quietly stepped out at 3 pm, when all the housework was done and everyone was taking their afternoon nap. Outside the polling station, though, men at a table began abusing me in dirty language.” **She was told they would let her vote only if she was accompanied by her husband** or some family elder. She said, “I had come out alone to vote without telling anyone, if someone found out I would be in big trouble, so I went back home.”

## **B) Many complaints about the role of police and election officials**

Many of the voters who spoke to us, told us that the **EC authorities and police also played a role in deterring and discouraging voters instead of protecting their right to vote.**

### **1. Voters forced to make multiple visits to polling station in attempts to vote Geedhpura, (Sanand Taluka), Booths 107, 108**

A man (age 52, from the Darbar community) told us, “When I went to cast my vote at 4 pm, the police told me the **EVM is out of order**, come back later. When I went again at 5 pm, they said **voting time is up**, you're too late.”

A 22-year-old man went to vote at 5 pm, but was prevented from voting. He said, “BJP cadres got into the polling booth while police kept legitimate voters out of the booth, telling them, time's up, voting is now closed.”

A 73 year-old woman said, “BJP cadres marked my finger with ink and told me, your vote has been cast, go home.” Another woman, age 37, said she too was told exactly the same thing at 10 am. But she went back at 4 pm, only to hear the police tell her the same thing.

### **Andej, (Sanand Taluka), Booth 11, 12, 13**

A Dalit man aged 67 said, “I first tried to vote at 8 am, the EC officials said there's no electricity, come later. When I went again at 12 pm, they said it's a lunch break, try again later. On my third attempt at 4 pm, they finally let me vote.”

Two elderly voters (the first a woman aged 68 and the other a man aged 76) had similar experiences: when they arrived singly to vote, the polling officials sent them home, telling them their **name was not on the voter list**. When they returned later with their respective sons (who argued with the officials), they were allowed to vote.

A 19 year-old girl, eager to vote in her first election, went to vote at 9 am, only to have the EC representatives themselves steal her vote. She said, “The election officer asked me, **are you educated?** I replied that I never got a chance to go to school, and he said, then **how will you be able vote, let us help and guide you**. Then this guy sitting there came with me up to the machine and **pressed the Lotus button, whereas I didn't want to vote for the Lotus**. I told the officer, this man didn't let me press the button for myself, but he replied, **your vote has been cast, you can go home**. And I was forced to leave the room.”

## **Rahimpura (Kalol Municipality Area)**

Most of the women voters we met in this area said they **had been turned away on their first attempt** to vote. They said that many men who were turned away in the morning, could not vote because they were away at work the rest of the day. Women said that if they went singly they were turned away not once but twice, and many could only register their vote on their **third attempt** when they found strength in numbers. Some said they were **turned away as many as three times** in the morning before being able to vote on their **fourth try** later in the day.

**2. Arbitrary demands for documentation**\_to verifying voter identity was alleged to be another pretext to misinform and deter voters. The same 68 year-old woman in Andej (mentioned above) said that though she had her voter i-card as well as the voter slip, she was told that she needed her Aadhar card in order to vote. A 34 year-old man (a driver by profession) in Rahimpura said that voter slips had not been distributed to voters in his area. When he went to vote, he said the BLO told him his name was not on the voters' list. He reasoned that his Aadhaar card and driving licence were enough to establish his identity, but the BLO said he could not vote unless he furnished a voter id-card.

### **C) Muslim voters targeted by miscreants from their own community recruited by the ruling party**

1. In **Kalol Municipality Area**, voters told us that **petty criminals from the Muslim community, some of them released from prison on parole on the eve of elections**, ganged up to keep voters from reaching the polling station. Several woman whose polling station was Rahimpura (Ward 6, Booth No.130) said that “the easiest route to the polling station, past Swad Hotel, was



barred by a group of criminals from our community, and the police.” One woman aged 65 said her daughter-in-law went to vote with a few friends at 2:30 pm: “They were assaulted by criminal Muslims working for the BJP. My daughter-in-law was shoved by them against a wall, and hurt her head quite badly. She returned without voting, and we had to wash the blood off her head.”

These miscreants also reportedly tried to persuade Muslim voters to “boycott” voting, to protect the community from retaliation from the BJP municipal authorities and Government.

The Maulana of a local masjid spoke to us about his experience at the Rahimpura polling station - Ward 6, Booth 2, when he went to cast his vote at 10 am. He said these miscreants told him, “Vote bahishkar karo” (boycott the election). If Muslims don't vote, the BJP-run municipality will not demolish the dargah near the market (Geba Shah Peer) as well as Anjum Wadi (a marriage hall).” He continued, “BJP's Hindu *karyakartas* stood back and let the Muslim bootleggers (paroled from prison and paid) to do the dirty job. The latter told Muslim voters they were '*Kaum ke gaddar*' (traitor to the community) if they voted.”

The Maulana said that while some became more determined to cast their votes, in response to the intimidation, it is true that several voters who were turned away, didn't return to vote. “Voters of Abrar society just behind Swad hotel couldn't cast votes in both their booths (Ishwar school and Bharat school). Also, vegetable vendors in the market were threatened that the municipality would remove their *redhis* (handcarts) if they voted, and they got scared. I spoke to them the next day and they said they couldn't cast their votes.”

## 2. Juhapura, Ahmedabad

The voters we met in Juhapura (Vejalpur assembly constituency) informed us that seasoned criminals were deployed at several polling booths to intimidate voters. Juhapura in Ahmedabad is India's largest Muslim ghetto. Here, the fear even a week after the elections was palpable. Voters did not want to be seen speaking to us, and did not want us to record details like age and booth number, for fear of being identified. In one particular area of Juhapura, we were told that a particular criminal '**Kalu Gardan**' (thus named because he is said to slit the throat (*gardan*) of any challenger to his fiefdom) was employed to control the polling booth areas and intimidate voters.

### **ECI Must Set Up A Tribunal To Investigate Reports And Allegations of Voter Suppression**

Voter suppression usually serves only one purpose: to make the difference between victory and defeat in a closely fought election. In Gandhinagar, if the BJP's victory was never in any doubt, why then would the party resort to this scale and intensity of voter suppression? Off the record, many voters told us that Amit Shah wanted a win with a margin of more than 10 lakh votes – the highest in India, and BJP workers were given this target as soon as the nomination form was filled up. This too is an allegation needing investigation.

**Article 326 of the Constitution** of India affirms that every adult citizen of India has the **right to vote**. A Manipur High Court judgment (Shri Haokholet Kipgen vs Shri Ngamthagn Haokip, 13 October, 2023, para 35) noted that “**Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India** provides for freedom of speech and expression. **Voters'**

**speech or expression in case of election would include casting of votes, that is to say, voter speaks out or expresses by casting vote.”**

Voter testimonies shared above claim that these constitutionally guaranteed rights were severely curtailed in the Home Minister's name and in his constituency. The kind of voter suppression alleged is an exercise in disenfranchisement and demoralisation of non-BJP voters: in particular but not exclusively Dalit, OBC and Muslim voters i.e. from the marginalized communities. These allegations, if true, cast a shadow on the credibility of India's free and fair election process and the democratic future of India.

We want to underline how deeply the voters we met value and cherish their right to vote. Most of the voters said that this was the first time ever that they had been unable to cast their vote, and they were deeply disturbed at what this bodes for the future of the country's democracy. First-time voters who were excited to vote were disappointed at being prevented.

We feel that the Election Commission and all Constitutional institutions owe answers and need to ensure justice to the democratic spirit of the voters of Gandhinagar, and to the whole country. An independent investigation is urgently needed, where Gandhinagar voters can testify without fear of reprisals.

**We request the ECI to urgently investigate into these serious allegations and take appropriate and stringent action to address these grievances and ensure free and fair election process, as it is duty-bound to do.**

Prof. Hemantkumar Shah (Noted Ahmedabad-based Economist and Writer)

Kavita Krishnan (Delhi-based Feminist and Writer),

Lara Jesani, (General Secretary, PUCL Maharashtra)

Dev Desai (ANHAD activist)

**ANHAD, New Delhi**

## Annexures

1. News Report in Vartha Bharati dated April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 titled “Controversy arises as hoardings use Mandir to seek votes for BJP in Gandhi Nagar”
2. News Report in THE AIDEM dated April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 titled “Amit Shah’s Gandhi Nagar sees blatant strong arm tactics by police and goons in campaign for Home Minister”.
3. Letter to ECI Shri Rajiv Kumar, dated April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 sent by Shabnam Hashmi complaining the blatant use of power by the government officials, BJP campaigners, to frighten the voters. Use of symbols of religion and asking the voters to vote in the name of religion by the BJP Candidate was also complained.
4. News Report in NavJivan dated April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 reported that the voters have been threatened by BJP members to vote for BJP. Referring to the letter sent to ECI by Activist Shabnam Hashmi, the report said that the police called Congress Candidate, Sonal Patel and asked her to cancel her road show.
5. News Report in Sabrang India dated April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 titled “Human rights activist Shabnam Hashmi flags malpractices prior to Gujarat polling day, alleges misuse of power and assertion of undue influence by state apparatus.
6. News Report in National Herald dated April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 titled “Police, state out to ensure largest margin of victory for Amit Shah says complaint”. In the letter to CEC, rights activist points to the use of official machinery by BJP in Gandhinagar Constituency.
7. News Report in The Wire dated April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 titled “Congress Candidate alleges she was stopped from campaigning by Police”. Sonal Patel, the Congress candidate from Gandhinagar alleged that BJP workers stopped her car and threatened her on April 8.
8. News Report in Counterview stating the complain filed by Shabnam Hashmi titled “State Machinery helping Amit Shah win with highest margin in India: Letter to ECI”
9. News Report in Gujarati Newspaper dated May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 stated that 80% of voter slips in BJP’s Karso and Vejalpur assemblies have not been distributed to keep the voters from voting.
10. News Report in The Guardian dated May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 titled “Pressured to Withdraw: BJP accused of intimidation tactics in India polls” Opposition says ruling party undermining democracy by using to harass candidates into not contesting in elections.

## Annexure - 1

### **Controversy arises as hoardings use Mandir to seek votes for BJP in Gandhi Nagar**

Vartha Bharati | 18-04-2024 | 20:26:00 IST

<https://english.varthabharati.in/india/controversy-arises-as-hoardings-use-mandir-to-seek-votes-for-bjp-in-gandhi-nagar>

Controversy arises as hoardings use Mandir to seek votes for BJP in Gandhi Nagar

Ahmedabad: In the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections 2024, a contentious issue has emerged in the Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha constituency in Gujarat, where hoardings featuring references to a temple have been erected to garner support for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The hoardings, which prominently display slogans advocating for the re-election of the Modi government and referencing the construction of a temple, have raised concerns about potential violations of the Model Code of Conduct, which prohibits the use of religion to solicit votes.

The hoardings, bearing slogans such as "Phir ek baar Modi sarkar," "Modi ki guarantee," and "Viksit Bharat," prominently feature the phrase "500 varsh baad bhaviya mandir Shri Ram Mandir," invoking the fulfilled promise of the construction of a grand temple dedicated to Lord Ram.

Social activist Shabnam Hashmi took to her social media handle to report the issue, urging the Election Commission of India (ECI) to take action against the perceived violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

Several users echoed Hashmi's sentiments, expressing disappointment and condemnation over the apparent exploitation of religious sentiments for political gain. One user questioned the lack of action from the ECI, while another criticized the focus on religious rhetoric instead of developmental issues. Others expressed concern about the influence of such tactics on the electorate, questioning the discernment of the people of Gujarat in light of these tactics.

## Annexure - 2

### **Amit Shah's Gandhi Nagar Sees Blatant Strong Arm Tactics By Police And Goons in Campaign for Home Minister**

<https://theaidem.com/en-money-and-muscle-power-at-play-in-gandhi-nagar/>

#### **The AIDEM**

□ April 19, 2024

Human Rights activist Shabnam Hashmi visited the Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha constituency between April 14 and 18, 2024 after hearing from many of her friends and contacts about the strong arm tactics employed by police, security agencies and political goons in the election campaign for Amit Shah, union Home Minister and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from the seat. She travelled in the constituency and interacted with scores of people collecting information and evidence.

Following this she has written to the Election Commission of India (ECI) highlighting how these strong arm tactics are being enforced in the constituency. She has made the following specific points in the letter. □ The State machinery is creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation to ensure that the Home Minister can win by the biggest margin and fulfil his dream of becoming the winning candidate with maximum margins of vote. □ She also pointed out that local goons are being used to threaten voters and leaders with active encouragement of political leaders of the ruling party as well as the officers who are supposed to follow the instructions of being impartial.

Hashmi also added that the State Machinery including the top officials are campaigning on behalf of Amit Shah and that he and his team are being allowed to use religious symbols on banners and ask vote in the name of religion.

She has also questioned the ECI's inaction in the constituency and has sought immediate corrective measures.

Read the full text of the Shabnam Hashmi's letter to the ECI below.

## Annexure- 3

### Urgent Action Required in Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha, Gujarat against intimidation by state machinery



**shabnam hashmi** <shabnamhashmi@gmail.com>

11:28 AM  
(0 minutes  
ago)

to cec, ecsss, ecgk

Shri Rajiv Kumar  
The Chief Election Commissioner  
Election Commission of India  
New Delhi

19/04/2024

Sir,

I want to bring to your notice serious issues which need to be urgently looked into.

Last week I got several calls from various people from the Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha constituency about undue pressure being put on various community and political leaders by state apparatus.

I tried discussing the issue on the phone but after several rounds of telephonic conversations I realised that it was important to get first-hand information.

I went to Ahmedabad on April 14 and returned early morning on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2024.

There are 7 assembly constituencies in the Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha Constituency. Out of the seven assembly constituencies I visited and spoke to people from 6 assembly constituencies: Sabarmati, Sanand, Vejalpur, Kalol, Ghatlodia and Naranpura.

The people with whom I interacted include over 200 community leaders, student leaders, ordinary people, Congress and AAP members and district level leaders, some candidates fighting from other parties. I also had detailed interaction with Ms Sonal Patel the India Alliance candidate fighting on INC ticket.

I am not going to write any names here as after experiencing the atmosphere on the ground I feel that there could be further harassment of people from the state machinery, if the names were mentioned here.

A large number of people have been getting calls from PIs of different police stations (PI is in charge of local police stations), ACP, from LCB (crime branch in rural areas, small towns is called LCB), from Crime Branch in cities and some were even called by the IG Range. An ACP who was earlier PI in the same area has been posted there again on a senior post as he knows everyone on the ground including the anti-social elements, who are being also instructed to create mischief. In many



cases *mukhbirs* are approaching people and telling them that so and so (PI, LCB, ACP, IG Range) wants to meet them.

There are several levels of these interactions with the police and crime branch from cajoling to become inactive and not campaign for Congress candidate. I was told that level of threats and likely consequences, if they don't agree, depend upon the status of the person whom they have called. Some have been threatened with dire consequences of cases being filed against them or reopening of old cases of petty crime and turning them into big ones. Those with some standing in the community have been forced to file nominations as independent candidates or from other opposition parties specially to cut into the Muslim and Dalit votes.

While some were strongly told not to campaign for Congress, others were told to remain at home and eat chicken and fish (zaroorat hogi to bhijwa doonga – if you need I will send). Meetings were held at Karnawati Club with community leaders where crime branch, SOG officers and police were present along with a former and present BJP MLA and they were strictly told to ensure that candidates should be put up and nominations must be filed. Money is being offered openly.

Some senior leaders were told – *nishkriya ho jao, kyon panga le rahe ho, tumhari umeedwar to jeetegi nahi, sarey MLA, counsellors BJP ke hain. Amit Bhai desh ke bade neta hain, unka sapna hai poore desh men sabse zyada margin se jeetne ka, unki ichcha ko poora karna hai, unki asmita ka sawal hai.*

*18 ko amit bhai ki rally hai, koi kala jhanda nahi hona chahiye kahin. Thande raho.*

Many were told, *tumhara kaam karwa denge.*

In another constituency all senior community leaders were called and told that they have to work for Amit bhai. *Tumhare yahan se vote nahi nikalta hai. Is baar peti men se vote nahi nikla to yahan ka koi kaam nahi hoga, samajh lo.*

A leader who said that he will not agree to what they were telling him and that they had nothing against him was told *'jab tak ghar pahunchoge do case lag jayenge'*.

Chairmen and secretaries of various cooperative bodies including cooperative banks, milk cooperatives, APMC, Purchase Unions, GSC bank etc. were summoned and have been instructed to campaign for Amit Shah. Senior officers have instructed them to ensure that staff does the campaign.

Sonal Patel, the INC candidate's vehicle was surrounded and stopped by BJP officer bearers in Pethapur on April 8, 2024. She was threatened with dire consequences if she did not leave. This added to the fear and many supporters could not come out for the next day for electoral campaign due to fear.

I received a call today morning from Ghatlodiya. Yesterday students were called in a college and were told that they have Viva exam. Once in college they were told that everyone has to join Amit Shah's road show. When students objected they were told that they would be failed in the internal exam if they do not go for Amit Shah's road

show. Approximately 700- 800 students were forced to attend Amit Shah's Road Show.

Anti- social elements have also been called and instructed to disrupt voting on the election day and to ensure no rickshaws are available in the afternoon.

In 2019 Juhapura and many other Muslim areas had witnessed disruption as anti-social elements supported by police and BJP MLAs had disrupted polling by snatching away the election lists, throwing away the tables of volunteers outside booths and creating a ruckus so that more voters don't come out to vote. This has happened outside FD School, NK School, Bata School, Makdampura School, AI School, Sunrise School, New Age School, Sian School, Adarsh Hindi Vidyalaya among other places.

In hundreds of places in the constituency hoardings with the Ram Mandir are up with the text- Phir ek baar modi Sarkar, Modi ki guarantee, Viksit Bharat, 500 varsh baad bhaviya mandir , Shri ram mandir- Kamal ka button dabao, Bhajpa ko jitaao , Gandhinagar Lok Sabha road show , 18 April 2024, Guruwar this is blatant violation of model code of conduct and election commission cannot be a mute spectator but as of now no actions has been taken to stop seeking vote using religion and religious symbols.

Congress workers are being threatened not to put up banners. Congress banners have been removed from several places.

This is absolutely reprehensible and unacceptable. The State machinery is creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation to ensure that the Home Minister can win by the biggest margin and fulfil his dream of becoming the winning candidate with maximum margins of vote.

I therefore would like to reiterate:

1. That local goons are being used to threaten voters and leaders with active encouragement of the both political leaders of the ruling party and the officers which are supposed to follow the instructions of being impartial, as issued by you.
2. That the State Machinery including the top officials are campaigning on behalf of a candidate (Amit Shah). Are they above the law and have instructions to violate their constitutional duty blatantly and with impunity.
3. That has the BJP candidate been given permission by the election commission to use religious symbols on banners and ask vote in the name of religion.
4. That is this atmosphere of fear, threats and intimidation congenial for free and fair elections, is election commission not responsible for ensuring conditions for the citizens to exercise their right to choose a candidate without fear.

These are serious allegations which people have made which reflect on the entire process of election. I urge you to urgent enquiry and take immediate steps to stop this harassment of the local voters, community and political leaders by the local state machinery.

I also urge you to ensure that extra forces are deployed in Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha constituency to ensure that people can vote peacefully and on May 7<sup>th</sup> anti-social elements, local police and ruling party does not create a situation like they did in 2019.

Yours sincerely  
Shabnam Hashmi  
Human Rights Defender  
Mobile: 9811807558  
Founder Anhad  
267A, Gulmohar Avenue  
Jamia Nagar  
New Delhi-110025

## Annexure 4

गांधीनगर में पुलिस की लोगों को धमकी, 'वयों पंगा ले रहे हो, अमित भाई को रिकॉर्ड मार्जिन से जिताना है...'

सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता शबनम हाशी ने चुनाव आयोग को पत्र भेजकर मामले का संज्ञान लेने और कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया है।

गुजरात में तैनात चुनाव आयोग द्वारा नियुक्त पर्यवेक्षक और गुजरात पुलिस चुनाव के दौरान लेवल प्लेइंग फ़िल्ड (मुकाबले में बराबरी का मौका) मुहैया कराने में पूरी तरह नाकाम रही है। यह आरोप मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त को भेजे गए एक पत्र में लगाया गया है। पत्र में कहा गया है कि गांधी नगर से मिली सूचनाओं और लोगों के बयान से स्पष्ट है कि सरकारी मशीनरी का दुरुपयोग हो रहा है और पुलिस द्वारा लोगों को डराया धमकाया जा रहा है ताकि केंद्रीय गृहमंत्री अमित शाह को रिकॉर्ड सबसे बड़े अंतर से जिताना जा सके। इस बाबत चुनाव अधिकारियों से की गई शिकायतों को नजरंदाज़ किया जा रहा है। मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त को संबोधित पत्र में मुख्यतयः निम्न बिंदुओं और गंभीर उल्लंघन को रेखांकित किया गया है:

पुलिस द्वारा गांधीनगर में लोगों को फोन कर कांग्रेस उम्मीदवार सोनल पटेल के रोड शो न जाने और उनके लिए प्रचार न करने को कहा जा रहा है।

इस किस्म की कॉल थानेदारों से लेकर लोकल क्राइम ब्रांच और एसीपी के दफ्तर से किए जाए रहे हैं, और एक मामले में तो आईजी के दफ्तर से ऐसी कॉल की गई है।

पुलिस द्वारा लोगों को धमकी दी जा रही है और उनके पद के हिसाब से चुनाव प्रचार से दूर रहने को कहा जा रहा है। कुछ लोगों को नए केसों में फंसाने या पुराने केस खोलने की धमकी तक दी जा रही है और उन्हें बड़े मामलों में बदलने को कहा जा रहा है।

ऐसे लोग जिनकी अपने समुदायों में कुछ हैसियत है, उन्हें निर्दलीय उम्मीदवार के तौर पर चुनाव मैदान में उतरने को कहा जा रहा है ताकि मुस्लिम या दलित वोटों को विभाजित किया जा सके।

जहां कुछ लोगों को प्रचार से दूर रहने को कहा जा रहा है, वहीं कुछ लोगों से कहा गया है कि घर में रहो और मुर्गा-मछली खाओ (और जरूरत होगी तो भिजवा दूंगा)।

कुछ लोगों को पैसों की पेशकश भी खुलेआम की जा रही है। लोगों से कहा जा रहा है कि,

‘निष्क्रिय हो जाओ, वर्यो पंगा ले रहो हो, तुम्हारी उम्मीदवार तो जीतेगी नहीं...अमित भाई देश के बड़े नेता हैं, उनका सपना है देश में सबसे ज्यादा मार्जिन से जीतने का, उनकी इच्छा को पूरा करना है...’

एक विधानसभा क्षेत्र में समुदाय के सभी वरिष्ठ नेताओं को बुलाकर कहा गया है कि उन्हें अमित भाई के लिए काम करना है। कहा गया कि, ‘तुम्हारे यहां से वोट नहीं निकलता है, इस बार पेटी में से वोट नहीं निकला तो यहां का कोई काम नहीं होगा समझ लो...’

विभिन्न सहकारी संगठनों के चेयरमैन और सदियों (इनमें बैंक, मिल्क कोऑपरेटिव, एपीएमसी, यूनियन, जीएससी बैंक आदि) को बुलाकर अमित शाह के पक्ष में प्रचार करने को कहा गया है।

घटलोदिया में एक कॉलेज के छात्रों से कहा गया है कि उन्हें गुरुवार को होने वाले अमित शाह के रोड शो में शामिल होना है। इस पर जब कुछ छात्रों ने एतराज किया तो उनसे कहा गया कि ऐसा नहीं किया तो उन्हें इंटरनल इन्जाम में फेल कर दिया जाएगा।

कांग्रेस कार्यकर्ताओं को पोस्टर-बैनर न लगाने की चेतावनी दी जा रही है। कई जगहों से कांग्रेस को पोस्टर बैनर हटा दिए गए हैं।

शहर के तमाम इलाकों में राम मंदिर के होर्डिंग लगा दिए गए हैं जिन पर लिखा है कि 500 वर्ष बाद भव्य मंदिर, श्रीराम मंदिर – कमल का बटन दबाओ, भाजपा को जिताओ। इस बारे में चुनाव आयोग ने कोई कदम नहीं उठाया है जबकि खुलेआम धार्मिक प्रतीकों का इस्तेमाल कर वोट मांगे जा रहे हैं।

अपने पत्र में सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता शबनम हाशी ने आरोप लगाया है कि सरकारी मशीनरी का जमकर दुरुपयोग किया जा रहा है और अमित शाह के लिए शीर्ष सरकारी अधिकारी प्रचार कर रहे हैं। उन्होंने चुनाव आयोग से सवाल पूछा है, “क्या ये लोग कानून से ऊपर हैं और क्या खुलेआम अपनी कानूनी और संवैधानिक जिम्मेदारियों का उल्लंघन करने की उन्हें छूट दी गई है?”

पत्र में शबनम हाशी ने आग्रह किया है कि चुनाव आयोग मामले का संज्ञान लेकर तुरंत जरूरी कदम उठाए और स्थानीय मतदाताओं, समुदायों और राजनीतिक कार्यकर्ताओं का उत्पीड़न बंद कराए।

## Annexure 5

### **Human rights activist Shabnam Hashmi flags malpractices prior to Gujarat polling day, alleges misuse of power and assertion of undue influence by state apparatus**

<https://sabrangindia.in/human-rights-activist-shabnam-hashmi-flags-malpractices-prior-to-gujarat-polling-day-alleges-misuse-of-power-and-assertion-of-undue-influence-by-state-apparatus/>

SABRANGINDIA

APRIL 19, 2024

Writing a complaint to the ECI, Hashmi has urged the authority to ensure that free and fair elections take place and disruption of voting does not take place

On April 19, Human rights activist Shabnam Hashmi approached the Election Commission of India (ECI) to highlight malpractices and instances of undue influence being implemented by state apparatus in Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha constituency. As per the complaint, Hashmi has provided that a large number of people belonging to various communities have been getting calls from police stations and crime branch with the aim of creating confusion. Through these calls, people, including political party members, are allegedly being threatened to become inactive and not campaign for Congress candidate. Notably, the threats specify of dire consequences for people in case they do not abide by what they are being told by the state apparatus.

In her complaint, Hashmi has written “There are several levels of these interactions with the police and crime branch from cajoling to become inactive and not campaign for Congress candidate. I was told that level of threats and likely consequences, if they don’t agree, depend upon the status of the person whom they have called. Some have been threatened with dire consequences of cases being filed against them or reopening of old cases of petty crime and turning them into big ones.”

It is essential to note that Hashmi has also specifically provided details of the meetings that took place between police and crime branch officers and present and former BJP MLAs. She wrote “Meetings were held at Karnawati Club with community leaders where crime branch, SOG officers and police were present along with a former and present BJP MLA and they were strictly told to ensure that candidates should be put up and nominations must be filed. Money is being offered openly.”

Furthermore, Hashmi provided that chairmen and secretaries of various cooperative bodies including cooperative banks, milk cooperatives, APMC, Purchase Unions, GSC bank, etc., have been instructed to campaign for Home Minister Amit Shah. Along with this, she highlighted how college students were being forced to attend Shah’s road show, warning them of being given failing grades in their internal exams if they skip the said show.

Hashmi has also alleged regarding the plans in place to disrupt polling and elections by stating “Anti-social elements have also been called and instructed to disrupt voting on the Election Day and to ensure no rickshaws are available in the afternoon.”

With this, Hashmi has urged the ECI to take cognizance of the serious allegations being made by her and the residents of Gujarat and “ensure that extra forces are deployed in Gandhi Nagar Lok Sabha constituency to ensure that people can vote peacefully on May 7, and anti-social elements, local police and ruling party does not create a situation like they did in 2019.”

The full complaint can be read here:

## Annex 6

### **Police, state out to ensure largest margin of victory for Amit Shah, says complaint**

**In letter to CEC, rights activist points to the use of official machinery by the BJP in Gandhinagar constituency**

Amit Shah files his nomination from Gandhinagar for the Lok Sabha election 2024 (photo: PTI)

<https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/national/police-and-state-machinery-out-to-ensure-largest-margin-of-victory-for-amit-shah>

#### **NH Digital**

Updated: 20 Apr 2024, 12:06 PM

Observers deployed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Gujarat Police which has been reporting to the commission for the past month have failed to ensure a level playing field, alleges a complaint addressed to the chief election commissioner (CEC).

In a sensational letter to the CEC, human rights activist Shabnam Hashmi has accused that the state machinery is being misused and top officials are campaigning on behalf of a candidate (Union home minister Amit Shah). ❏Are they above the law and have instructions to violate their Constitutional duty blatantly and with impunity?❏ she asks.

Hashmi has urged the CEC to order an inquiry and take immediate steps to stop harassment of voters, community and political leaders by the local state machinery.

The first-person account from state capital Gandhinagar suggests that blatant use of state machinery and intimidation by the police to ensure that Shah wins by the "highest margin in electoral history" have been ignored by the ECI.

The letter to the CEC draws his attention to the following serious breaches:

1. Police are calling up people in Gandhinagar and advising them against attending road shows by [Congress candidate Sonal Patel](#) or campaigning for her.
2. The calls have gone out from officers in-charge of police stations, the local crime branch, an ACP, and in one case even an IG (inspector-general).



3. Threats are being made by the police, their nature depending upon the called individual's stature. Some have been threatened with new cases or reopening of old cases, or turning them into bigger offences.
4. Those with some standing in the community have been coerced into filing nominations as independent candidates or from several opposition parties to cut into Muslim and Dalit votes.
5. While some were told not to campaign for Congress, others were told to remain at home and eat chicken and fish (*zaroorat hogi to bhijwa doonga* ❌ if you need I will send).
6. Money is being offered openly. Some senior leaders were told ❌ *nishkriya ho jao, kyon panga le rahe ho, tumhari umeedwar to jeetegi nahi* ❌ *Amit bhai desh ke bade neta hain, unka sapna hai poore desh men sabse zyada margin se jeetne ka, unki ichcha ko poora karna hai*. Rough translation: stop trying, your candidate won't win anyway...*Amit bhai* is a big leader, it's his dream to win by the highest margin in the country, we must fulfil his desire.
7. In one Assembly segment, all senior community leaders were called and told they would have to work for *Amit bhai*. "*Tumhare yahan se vote nahi nikalta hai. Is baar peti mein se vote nahi nikla to yahan ka koi kaam nahi hoga, samajh lo* (no votes come from your area; if that happens this time, no work will be done for you).
8. Chairpersons and secretaries of various cooperative bodies including cooperative banks, milk cooperatives, APMC, purchase unions, GSC bank etc. were summoned and have been instructed to campaign for Amit Shah.
9. Students in a college in Ghatlodiya were told that everyone had to join Amit Shah ❌s roadshow on Thursday. When some students objected, they were told they would be failed in the internal exam if they did not comply.
10. Congress workers are being warned not to put up banners. Congress banners have been removed from several places.

Hundreds of hoardings with images of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya can be seen bearing texts like '500 varsh baad bhavya mandir (revered temple after 500 years)', 'Shri Ram mandir ❌ *kamal ka button dabao, Bhajpa ko jitao* (press the lotus button, help the BJP win)' etc. No action has been taken by the ECI to stop the party seeking votes using religion and religious symbols.

*Join our official telegram channel ([@nationalherald](#)) and stay updated with the latest headlines*

## Annexure 7

POLITICS

### **Gujarat: Congress Candidate Alleges She Was Stopped From Campaigning By Police**

Author

Tarushi Aswani

Apr 20, 2024

<https://thewire.in/politics/gujarat-congress-candidate-alleges-she-was-stopped-from-campaigning-by-police>

Sonal Patel, the Congress candidate from Gandhinagar – the seat Amit Shah will also contest from – alleged that BJP workers stopped her car and threatened her on April 8. She said her party workers in Sanand were also harassed into silence.

New Delhi: “I was stopped from campaigning. If the BJP is so confident of victory, why stop other candidates from campaigning?”, asks Sonal Patel, the Congress’s candidate from Gujarat’s Gandhinagar. Patel, 63, is contesting from Gandhinagar, which is also being eyed by Union home minister and BJP candidate Amit Shah, for his second tenure – the BJP has, since 1989, been on a winning spree in the Gandhinagar parliamentary constituency. In 2019, Amit Shah secured a massive victory, defeating the rival Congress candidate Chatursinh Javanji Chavda by over 5.5 lakh votes.

They want to create some sort of record victory like in 2019. That is why they are using the police to create obstacles in other candidates’ campaigning routines,” alleges Patel. Patel, also the party co-in charge for Mumbai and western Maharashtra, is solid in her struggle against Shah. How is it that there are security issues only for me in Gandhinagar, that other people can freely campaign but the Congress can’t?” Patel asks. Apart from being stopped in Gandhinagar, Patel has alleged that Congress workers in Sanand were also harassed into silence and coerced into exhibiting non-participant behaviour in campaign routines.

Patel has served as a member of several architecture organisations. Before being elevated to the post of All-India Congress Committee secretary, Patel served as the president of the Gujarat Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee between 2012 and 2018. For Patel, ever since she decided to campaign at the beginning of April, she was coerced into staying silent. On April 8, her vehicle was allegedly surrounded and stopped by BJP office bearers, where she was threatened with dire consequences if she did not leave. This added to the fear, due to which many supporters did not come out for the next day’s campaigning round. Patel also told The Wire that Congress workers were being threatened not to put up banners. Congress banners have also been removed from several places, she said.

Sources have revealed to The Wire that various community and political leaders from the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency were being subjected to undue pressure from the state apparatus simply to reduce their involvement in and support towards Congress campaigns. Locals have also alleged that anti-social elements have been called and instructed to disrupt voting on election day and to ensure that no rickshaws are available in the afternoon. Regarding this mass movement of the state apparatus against several candidates who are opposing the BJP in the ongoing elections, Shabnam Hashmi, a social activist and human rights campaigner, visited six assembly constituencies – Sabarmati, Sanand, Vejalpur, Kalol, Ghatlodia and Naranpura – to see the ground reality for herself. Upon observation and interaction with over 200 community leaders, ordinary people, Congress and AAP members and district level leaders, and some candidates fighting from other parties, Hashmi wrote to the chief election commissioner (CEC) on how the police, including the crime branch, were either cajoling people into becoming inactive or not campaigning for Congress candidates, or were threatening people with consequences if they did not agree to do this. Some were threatened with “dire consequences of cases being filed against them or with [the] reopening of old cases of petty crime and turning them into big ones”, Hashmi alleged. She noticed that while some were told strongly not to campaign for the Congress, others were told to remain at home and eat chicken and fish (‘zaroorat hogi to bhijwa doonga’ – if you need, I will send – one person allegedly said).

Hashmi also writes how meetings were held at the Karnawati Club with community leaders where crime branch and special operations group officers, the police, and one former and one incumbent BJP MLA respectively were present, and that they were told strictly to ensure that candidates are put up and nominations filed. She also alleged that money was “being offered openly”. In her letter to the CEC, Hashmi wrote of how in 2019, Juhapura and many other Muslim areas in Ahmedabad had witnessed disruption during polling when anti-social elements supported by BJP MLAs and the police had snatched away election lists, thrown away tables used by volunteers outside booths and created a ruckus so that more voters did not come out to vote. She specifically said this happened outside FD School, NK School, Bata School, Makdampura School, AI School, Sunrise School, New Age School, Sian School and Adarsh Hindi Vidyalaya, among other places. Her letter also acknowledges how, in hundreds of places in the Gandhinagar constituency, hoardings with photos of the Ayodhya Ram Temple are up with text such as ‘phir ek baar Modi sarkar’, ‘Modi ki guarantee’, ‘Viksit Bharat’, ‘500 varsh baad bhaviya mandir’ and ‘Shri Ram Mandir – Kamal ka button dabao, Bhajapa ko jitao, Gandhinagar Lok Sabha show, 18 April 2024, Guruwar’. Stating how Patel and others were harassed, Hashmi has requested the CEC to take steps to stop this harassment of local voters as well as of community and political leaders by the local state machinery.

Patel and Hashmi have both urged authorities to ensure that extra forces are deployed in the Gandhinagar constituency to ensure that people can vote peacefully and that on May 7, anti-social elements, the local police and the ruling party do not create a situation like they did in 2019.

## Annexure 8

### **State machinery helping Amit Shah win with highest margin in India: Letter to ECI**

By Our Representative

<https://www.counterview.net/2024/04/state-machinery-helping-amit-shah-win.html>

Human rights defender Shabnam Hashmi, in a representation to Rajiv Kumar, Chief Election Commissioner, Election Commission of India (ECI), has alleged that the state machinery of Gujarat is putting "undue pressure" on various community and political leaders in order to ensure that Union Home minister Amit Shah wins the Lok Sabha elections with the highest number of votes in India from the Gandhinagar constituency.

Founder of human rights organisation Anhad, Hashmi said, during her visit of Ahmedabad from April 14 to April 18, when she interacted with a large number of youth, community and political leaders, including Sonal Patel, the Congress candidate pitted against Amit Shah, she was told that members of the Gujarat police force were cajoling them "to become inactive and not campaign for the Congress candidate."

"Some have been threatened with dire consequences of cases being filed against them or reopening of old cases of petty crime and turning them into big ones", Hashmi claimed, adding, "Those with some standing in the community have been forced to file nominations as independent candidates, or from other opposition parties, especially to cut into the Muslim and Dalit votes."

According to Hashmi, a meeting was held at a top elite club house where with several community leaders were told that Amit Shah is a big national leader, and "his dream is to win the elections with the highest number of votes in India", it added. Among those present included a former and a current BJP MLA, as also police officials.

Hashmi contended, leaders of various cooperative, bodies, including cooperative banks, milk cooperatives, Agriculture Produce Market Committees, purchase unions, etc. were summoned and "instructed to campaign for Amit Shah", with senior officers of these organisations being instructed to "ensure that staff should campaign for him."

*The letter has been sent to the ECI amidst apprehensions as to why the Congress has not made any formal complaint with the poll panel*

"Congress candidate Sonal Patel's vehicle was surrounded and stopped by BJP officer bearers in Pethapur on April 8, 2024. She was threatened with dire consequences if she did not leave. This added to the fear and many supporters could not come out for the next day for electoral campaign due to fear", she said in her letter sent on email.

It added, "Students were called in a college and were told that they have viva examination. Once in college, they were told that everyone has to join Amit Shah's road show. When students objected they were told that they would be failed in the internal examination if they do not go for Amit Shah's road show. Approximately 700-800 students were forced to attend his road show on April 18."

Stating that Ram Temple photographs are being used in posters for Amit Shah's campaign, Hashmi wondered if the BJP candidate has been given permission by the Election Commission to "use religious symbols on banners and ask vote in the name of religion."

The letter has been sent to the ECI amidst apprehensions as to why the Congress has not made any formal complaint with the top poll panel either in Gandhinagar or in Delhi. A Congress spokesperson told Counterview that the party candidate "has been told to make a representation to the ECI... We will let you know when the complaint has been made."

મતદારોને મતદાનથી વંચિત રાખવા ભાજપનો કારસો  
**વેજલપુર વિધાનસભામાં ૮૦ ટકા વોટર સ્ત્રીઓની વહંચણી નથી કરાઈ**

● કોંગ્રેસના નેતાએ ઈલેક્શન કમિશનમાં કરી ફરિયાદ ● જ્યાં મુસ્લિમ મતદાતાઓ વધુ પ્રમાણમાં છે ત્યાં વોટર સ્લીપ ન મળવાની ફરિયાદો ઊઠી

અમદાવાદ, તા. ૨ રાજ્યમાં ચૂંટણીનો માહોલ જાઓ છે ત્યારે અનેક વિસ્તારોમાં હજુ સુધી વોટર સ્લીપોની વહંચણી કરવામાં આવી નથી. આ બાબતને બુધ જ ગાંધીર ગણાવી આ ભાજપનો એક કારસો છે તેમ જણાવી સુરતના કોંગ્રેસના નેતા અસલમ સાયકલવાલાએ આ મામલે ચૂંટણી પંચમાં ફરિયાદ કરી છે. સુરતના ઘણાક વરિષ્ઠ નેતા અસલમ સાયકલવાલાએ ખારડોલી લોકસભા સીટ ઉપર કામરેજ, ખારડોલી અને માંગરોલ વિધાનસભા તેમજ નવસારી લોકસભા સીટમાં લિબાયત, ઉપના અને ચોર્ધાસી તાલુકા વિધાનસભામાંથી વોટર સ્લીપ નહીં મળવાની ઈલેક્શન કમિશનમાં ફરિયાદ કરી છે.

જેની વિગતો જોઈએ તો સૌથી ચોંકાવનારી બાબત ગાંધીનગર લોકસભા જ્યાંથી કેન્દ્રના મુકમની અમિત શાહ ચૂંટણી લડી રહ્યા છે ત્યાંની વેજલપુર વિધાનસભા વિસ્તારમાં આજ દિન સુધી ૮૦ ટકા સ્ત્રીઓની વહંચણી કરવામાં આવી

નથી. ગાંધીનગર લોકસભામાં આવેલ વેજલપુર વિધાનસભા મતવિસ્તાર કે જ્યાં મુસ્લિમ મતદારોની વસ્તી ૧.૩૫ લાખથી વધુ છે. મુસ્લિમ મતદારોને તેમના સંવેધાનિક અધિકારથી વંચિત રાખવા ભાજપ દ્વારા કારસો રચવામાં આવ્યો છે. ગુજરાતની વિવિધ લોકસભા જેવી કે આણંદ, બનાસકાંઠા, વલસાડ, જામનગર, કચ્છ, સાબરકાંઠા, અમરેલી, આણંદ, સુરેન્દ્રનગર, પાટણ, જુનાગઢ લોકસભા મત વિસ્તારોમાં મુસ્લિમ મતદારો નિષ્પૃષ્ઠ છે તે સ્થળે ઈલેક્શન કમિશનના અધિકારીઓ દ્વારા વોટર સ્લીપની

વહંચણી બાબતે નિષ્પૃષ્ઠ રીતે ફરજ બજાવવામાં રાજકીય દબાણ હેઠળ ચુક કરી રહ્યા છે. અમદાવાદ પશ્ચિમમાં દરિયાપુર, જામલપુર ખાડિયા તેમજ દાણીલીમડામાં મુસ્લિમ મતદાતાઓ વધુ પ્રમાણમાં છે. તે સ્થળે પણ વોટર સ્લીપ ન મળવાની ફરિયાદો ઊઠવા પામેલ છે. ગુજરાતમાં લોકસભાની ચૂંટણી ૭ મેના રોજ થનાર છે. ચૂંટણીમાં હવે થોડો જ સમય બાકી છે. ગુજરાત અને અમદાવાદની મુસ્લિમ મતદારોની સંખ્યા નિષ્પૃષ્ઠ હોય તેવા સ્થળે ઈલેક્શન કમિશનની વોટર સ્લીપ ન મળવાની ફરિયાદો ઊઠવા

પામેલ છે. આ સ્ત્રીઓની વહંચણી સંપૂર્ણ રીતે નિષ્પૃષ્ઠ અને લોકો કો મતદાન કરવાના સંવેધાનિક અધિકારથી વંચિત ના રહે તે માટે ભાજપના ઈશારે કામ કરતા ઈલેક્શન કમિશનના અધિકારીઓ અને BLOની સામે લોકસભાની હત્યાના ગુના હેઠળ ચીક ઈલેક્શન કમિશન દ્વારા કાનૂની પગલાં લેવા જોઈએ. આ બાબતે ઈલેક્શન કમિશન દ્વારા તમામ વિધાનસભાના EROને આદેશ આપવામાં આવે કે સ્ત્રીઓની વહંચણી વગેરે તકે કરવામાં આવે જેથી ચૂંટણીના બે દિવસ પહેલાં તમામ મતદાતાઓને સ્લીપ વહંચણીની કામગીરી સંપૂર્ણ રીતે પૂર્ણ થવી જોઈએ.

**મતદાતા સ્લીપ મેળવવા માટેની અગત્યના સૂચનો**

મતદારોને મતદાર સ્લીપ મેળવવામાં કનડગત થાય તો તાત્કાલિક પોતાના બુચના BLOનો સંપર્ક કરી મતદાતા સ્લીપ મેળવવી જોઈએ. સ્લીપ મેળવવા માટે મતદાતાઓ ઈલેક્શન કમિશનના ૧૯૫૮ નંબર ઉપર ECI Election Card No. નાંખી SMS કરીને પોતાના મોબાઈલ નંબર ઉપર બુચ નં. અને કમ નંબર, નામ સાથે SMSથી માહિતી પ્રાપ્ત કરી શકશે. ઈલેક્શન કમિશનની વોટર હેલ્પલાઈન નામની એપ મોબાઈલમાં ડાઉનલોડ કરી ઈલેક્શન કાર્ડ નંબર નાખી સર્ચ કરાશે તે માતદારનું નામ, બુચ નંબર, કમ નંબરની સ્લીપ મેળવી શકશે.

**રાજ્યની ગ્રાન્ટેડ-સંસ્કૃલોના જ્ઞાન સહાયકોનો ક**

અમદાવાદ, તા. ૨ રાજ્યની ગ્રાન્ટેડ તથા સરકારી માધ્યમિક સ્કૂલોમાં કરાર આધારિત જ્ઞાન સહાયકોનો કરાર ચૂંટણીના

80% voters slips have not been distributed in BJP's Karso and Vejalpur assemblies to keep voters from voting.  
 Reported on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## Annexure 10

### □ Pressured to withdraw □: BJP accused of intimidation tactics in India polls

Opposition say ruling party undermining democracy by using police to harass candidates into not contesting in elections

[Hannah Ellis-Petersen](#) and [Aakash Hassan](#) in Gandhinagar

Tue 14 May 2024 03.00 BST

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/14/bjp-accused-intimidation-india-elections-gujarat>

When the people of Gujarat cast their votes last week in India's six-week-long election, there was one constituency in the state that stood silent. There were no polling stations or impatient queues of people, and no one with the tell-tale inky finger. In Surat, no voting was necessary □ the outcome was already decided.

Mukesh Dalal, from the ruling Bharatiya Janata party (BJP), won the seat by default after every other candidate was either disqualified or dropped out of the race. It was the first time in 73 years that Surat's candidate was appointed, not elected.

Surat is not the only constituency in Gujarat to witness swathes of candidates going up against the BJP suddenly withdrawing from the race. In Gandhinagar, where Amit Shah, the home minister and prime minister Narendra Modi's right hand man, is running, 16 opposition candidates dropped out before last Tuesday's voting.

Gujarat is likely to be an easy win for the BJP in the election, which is also expected to return Modi to power for a third term. It is Modi's home state and the stronghold of his party, which has won every state election here since 1995, and in the last general election in 2019 won all 26 seats.

Yet some have alleged that there have been concerted efforts to cement BJP hegemony in the state and declare wins by huge margins by eliminating the opposition altogether. In Gandhinagar, the BJP is publicly aiming for Shah to win the seat by an unprecedented 1 million votes.

In Surat and Gandhinagar, opposition parties and activists have accused the BJP of undermining democratic processes by using party workers and police to intimidate and put pressure on opposing candidates to withdraw, sometimes with explicit threats of violence or direct harassment of their families. The BJP district and state spokespeople refused to comment. Gujarat's director general of police, Vikas Sahay, and the home minister, Shah, also did not respond.

Among those who withdrew in Surat was Baraiya Ramesh, 58, who has his own textile business and was running as an independent candidate. He alleged that after submitting his nomination, he began to face a campaign of intimidation.

□I was threatened by the police and pressured to withdraw,□ said Ramesh. □Everyone in Surat knows how every candidate was harassed and pressure was put on them to not fight the elections.□

Fearing the threats, he turned his phone off, but as soon as he turned it back on, he claims he was traced by police and picked up. □They clearly told me to withdraw the nomination, so I did,□ he said, adding that he feared for his safety but said it was important that he spoke out publicly. □Most of the candidates were threatened by the police.□

In Gandhinagar, five opposition candidates alleged threats in the buildup to campaigning, and 16 ultimately withdrew. Hours before voting began in Gandhinagar, Jitendra Chauhan, 39, who was running as a candidate for the Akhil Bhartiya Parivar party, posted a video on social media. Through sobs, he alleged he was forced to withdraw.

Chauhan previously worked for the BJP between 2012 and 2019, but told the Guardian he had become disillusioned with the party and had decided to run against Shah to fight for local issues. It was a decision he said that had □made my life hell□.

□As soon as I decided to submit my nomination, the police started following me everywhere,□ he said. □Then, on 16 April, when I submitted my nomination ~~papers~~, I started receiving threats from BJP workers. A BJP legislator threatened to jail me in some fake case.□

Syed Farzana, a polling agent of the Congress party, showing voting documents of her two sons, who she says were not allowed to vote allegedly by BJP workers. Photograph: Aakash Hassan

With every passing day, Chauhan said the threats got worse. □People would call me, come to my house, and give me an ultimatum to withdraw. Then the police started harassing my friends,□ he said. □I felt so threatened ~~that~~ that I had to withdraw my nomination.□

One candidate, Sumitra Maurya, 43, a schoolteacher, who contested elections for the first time with the Prajatantra Aadhar party, said she had refused to be cowed by the campaign of □unpleasant and frightening□ intimidation that began from the moment she submitted her nomination for Gandhinagar in April.

□I was well aware of who I was fighting against□the man who is India□s home minister, a political heavyweight,□ she said. □But I am a firm believer in the power of democracy.□

Initially, it started with a visit to Maurya□s home from unknown men, then ~~constant~~ calls to her and her husband, questioning why she was running. WhatsApp messages saying □offer□, □call me,□ and □it is urgent□ began to flood in, and then relatives began to call, asking her to withdraw.

Fearing the threats, she travelled with her family about 200 miles out of the city. But after they checked into their hotel, there was a knock on the door, and several men in plain clothes stood outside, asking to speak to her husband. As Maurya confronted the men, they eventually revealed they were from the crime branch of police who said they were under a lot of pressure from their seniors.



Through the hotel window, Maurya could see the men roaming around the property throughout the night and she claims two cars followed them when they drove back the next morning. She still refused to remove her name from the ballot.

□They want to create an example so that people like me think a hundred times before even thinking about contesting.□

Voting in Gandhinagar was also mired in allegations of widespread irregularities. In one video that emerged, Muslims □who are unlikely to support the BJP □appear to be being passed cash to pretend they had cast their votes.

Multiple polling agents told the Guardian they had witnessed Muslim voters being coerced or threatened into not voting and there are several videos that appear to show outsiders being brought in to illegally cast votes in the place of absentees. At least one booth in the constituency has been ordered to redo the polling.

□Throughout the campaigning and n the polling day, the police and local administration worked together with BJP workers to scare our workers and people who they thought would vote against the BJP,□ said Sonal Patel, 64, the candidate for the opposition Congress party in Gandhinagar, who remained in the race.

Patel also accused BJP workers of trying to pay off and blackmail Congress candidates and workers into switching sides and said she was repeatedly prevented from campaigning. □This has all been done because they want to win by the highest margin,□ she said.

Several candidates and human rights activists submitted complaints to the election commission □the body overseeing the polls which stands accused of being co-opted by the BJP government □and also requested extra police presence on polling day, but got no formal response. The local election commission did not respond to the Guardian□s request for comment.

Shabnam Hashmi, an activist who was on the ground, also submitted complaints to the election commission. □I have seen harassment and intimidation and manipulation in elections before, but never on this scale and never with the full state machinery behind it,□ said Hashmi. □It was unprecedented and very unfortunate for our democracy.□